

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5 1. A method for indicating expert availability from a pool of experts using a client system - server system, said method comprising the steps of:

connecting the client system to the server system;

5 accessing a database within the server system comprising a pool of experts, the experts pool further comprising identification of experts and their availability;

displaying expert information including expert availability information on the client system through an applet downloaded from the server system when a user calls upon an expert to seek assistance; and

10 contacting the expert based on user selected expert information input into the client system.

2. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information on the client system further comprises the step of displaying photographs of the available experts within the expert pool.

15 3. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information on the client system further comprises the step of displaying testimonials for the available experts within the expert pool.

20 4. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information on the client system further comprises the step of displaying biographical data of the available experts within the expert pool.

5. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information on the client system further comprises the step of displaying length of service for the available experts within the expert pool.

25 6. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information on the client system further comprises the step of displaying areas of expertise of the available experts within the expert pool.

7. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information on the client system further comprises the step of displaying previous customer interactions with the available experts within the expert pool.

8. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information on the client system further comprises the step of displaying which experts within the expert pool are free and which experts are helping other users.

9. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information on the client system further comprises the step of displaying which experts within the expert pool are free and which experts are helping other users through an expert availability indicator displayed on the client system.

10. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information through an expert availability indicator further comprises the step of displaying availability information through an applet implemented in at least one of a well known programming language such as Java, C, and C++.

11. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of displaying expert information through an expert availability indicator further comprises the step of tracking expert availability.

12. A method according to Claim 11 wherein said step of tracking expert availability further comprises the steps of:

tracking experts availability;

tracking users who are interested in contacting a specific expert;

tracking an amount of time each user has been waiting to connect with the specific expert; and

displaying the expert availability on the client system.

13. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of contacting an expert based on user input into the client system further comprises the step of using user input into a user interface to select a free expert or join a queue of an expert currently helping another user.

14. A method according to Claim 13 wherein said step of contacting an expert based on user input into the client system further comprises the step of using user input to select a free expert or join a queue of an expert currently helping another user after having previously selected the queue of a different expert.

5 15. A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of contacting an expert based on user input into the client system further comprises the step of selecting an expert based on a keyword match.

10 16. A method according to Claim 15 wherein said step of selecting an expert based on a keyword match further comprises the step of analyzing a user's request against the expertise and biographical data of available experts.

17. A system for indicating expert availability, through an applet, from a pool of experts, said system comprising:

a server system,

15 a client system configured with a browser, said client system connected to said server system; and

a database comprising an expert pool comprising identification of experts and their availability, said server system configured to cause expert availability information in said database to be displayed on said client system through an applet when a user calls upon an expert to seek assistance.

20 18. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said expert pool database further configured with photographs of the available experts.

19. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said expert pool database further configured with testimonials for the available experts.

25 20. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said expert pool database further configured with biographical data of the available experts.

21. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said expert pool database further configured with length of service for the available experts.

22. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said expert pool database further configured with areas of expertise for the available experts.

23. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said expert pool database further configured with specific customer previous interactions with the available experts.

24. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said expert pool database further configured to cause said server system to show a user which experts are free and which experts are helping other users on said client system.

25. A system according to Claim 24 wherein said expert pool database further configured to allow said client system to cause said server system to select a free expert or to join a queue of an expert currently helping another user.

26. A system according to Claim 25 wherein said expert pool further configured to allow said client system to cause said server system to select a free expert or join a queue of an expert currently helping another user after having previously selected the queue of a different expert.

27. A system according to Claim 25 wherein said expert pool database further configured to allow a user to engage an expert by exchanging textual messages.

28. A system according to Claim 25 wherein said expert pool further configured to allow a user to engage an expert by telephone.

29. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server system configured as a server system for a network of client devices.

30. A system according to Claim 29 wherein said server system and said client system are connected via a network.

31. A system according to Claim 30 wherein said network is at least one of a wide area network, a local area network, an intranet, and the Internet.

32. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server system is further configured to select an expert based on a keyword match after analyzing a

user's request against the expertise and biographical data and other information including correspondence record of chat sensors of the available experts.

5 33. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server system is further configured to display which experts within the expert pool are free and which experts are helping other users.

 34. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server system is further configured to display which experts within the expert pool are free and which experts are helping other users through an expert availability indicator displayed on the client system.

10 35. A system according to Claim 34 wherein said server system is further configured to display availability information through an applet implemented in at least one of a well known programming languages such as Java, C, and C++.

 36. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server system is further configured to track expert availability.

15 37. A system according to Claim 36 wherein said server system configured to display expert availability is further configured to:

 track expert availability;

 track users who are interested in contacting a specific expert;

20 track an amount of time each user has been waiting to connect with the specific expert; and

 display the expert availability on the client system.

 38. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server system further configured to contact an expert based on user input into the client system.

25 39. A system according to Claim 38 wherein said server system further configured to use user input from a user interface to select a free expert or join a queue of an expert currently helping another user.

 40. A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server system further configured to contact an expert based on user input from the client system to

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